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The Poetry and Philosophy OF TENNYSON

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**A Handbook of Six Lectures by
Edward Howard Griggs**

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B. W. HUEBSCH
Publisher
NEW YORK

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CROSSING THE BAR.

"Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark;

For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crost the bar."

—TENNYSON.

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SPIRIT OF THE COURSE.

THE interest of this course is divided almost equally between the appreciation of Tennyson's matchless art and the study of his philosophy and his message to the modern spirit. The work centers upon the two masterpieces of Tennyson: *The Idylls of the King*, in which his artistic power is most fully revealed, and *In Memoriam*, the most complete expression of his spiritual message. Certain of the more remarkable of his shorter poems will also be studied as culminating expressions at once of his art and his philosophy.

There are two widely different elements in Tennyson's contribution to the modern spirit, corresponding to the motives of his two masterpieces. His poetry fulfills for us something of the function of landscape painting, relieving us from the stress and hurry of present life. The more sordid aspects of the struggle for existence shocked Tennyson. The breaking-down of aristocratic forms, the bare, greedy character of half-born democracy offended him. He felt that the solution of the social problem lay rather in a return to the manners of an earlier period, under the benignant leadership of the gentleman, than in the completion of the struggle toward democracy in which we find ourselves involved. Thus it was with a feeling of relief that he turned from the life about him to the world of the Arthurian story with its old chivalric legends, full of dim, knightly figures and fair, unearthly ladies, weaving with mystic paces and waving hands the golden and rainbow web of a life of dreams. That Tennyson's meditation upon the material of the Arthurian story covered a period of more than fifty years is evidence of the place it occupied in his own thinking; and the poems clothing it form one of Tennyson's great contributions to the modern spirit, not only through the gift of calming and exalting beauty, but because, clothed in the dim forms of the remote world of chivalry, the eternal realities of the human spirit are revealed with an added beauty and mystery through the golden radiance or the gray mist of the years that lie between.

The other gift of Tennyson is in relation to the great problems of faith. Uniting as he did the best results of the older philosophy with a full, if sometimes reluctant, acceptance of the conclusions of physical science, his poetry answers peculiarly certain needs of modern life.

No one else has voiced our doubt and questioning more completely, yet Tennyson rises in *In Memoriam*, the poem that reveals the heart of his own experience, to a calm, exultant faith, including not ignoring doubt. His desire that *Crossing the Bar* should stand at the end of every complete edition of his works reveals his thought of it as a kind of last confession of his belief. It is as satisfyingly perfect in its limpid music as it is serene and exalted in emotion. Like a benediction at the end of a beautiful service it rounds the impression of Tennyson's message and life, affirming the accepted basis of Christian faith, but freed from hard dogmatism and stated in terms of the highest experience, voicing the heroic attitude in the presence of the unknown that is expressed in King Arthur or Ulysses, but softened by the intimate tenderness that comes from the sweet and smart of personal living, with an appreciation of the character of Christ. Tennyson's last word it is and worthy of all that goes before. Without a great positive contribution of original thought and new vision of life, Tennyson's tender and delicate appreciation of certain phases of experience, his unerring grasp of broad moral distinctions, his sense of the unity of law and the fundamental sanity of the universe at the heart, his unfailing hold upon the great thought of the past and the deeper basis of Christian faith, render him a spiritual teacher of unique value in a time when the old barriers and props have been shaken down, and all men who think have been forced into the intellectual arena to meet and conquer the sphinx-problems or die.

I. THE LIFE AND EARLIER WORK OF TENNYSON.

LECTURE OUTLINE.

Introduction.—To study the art and message of the poet who more than any other dominated the literature of the English-speaking world for more than half of the nineteenth century. As such a leader, peculiar significance in our study of his work. Poetry always fulfilling certain high spiritual functions—but these especially important in relation to modern life, and nowhere a better example of them than in Tennyson.

Poetry and life.—Art expressing the whole human spirit—intellect, emotion and will. Contrast philosophy and science. The two motifs in the progress of the human spirit: waves of science and waves of religion; extension of the area of knowledge and then the return to the spirit of man. Compare the occident and the orient; scholasticism and mysticism; Aristotle and Plato.

The life of appreciation as compared with the life of the understanding. How much of our joy depending upon the former. Love, faith, response to poetry, as in the life of appreciation. Expression of this life in art; hence the spiritual functions of poetry.

Poetry and modern needs.—Special significance in the service of poetry in our time. The tremendous advance in science, in the accumulation of knowledge, during the nineteenth century. Thus vast widening of the conception of the physical universe. Compare effects of astronomy and biology. Hence God seeming vague and distant, human life overshadowed and insignificant. All thinking men forced into the arena to struggle with the great problems of life as only a rare philosopher was compelled to meet them in past times.

Thus the significance of poetry as a revelation of the human spirit; and of Tennyson as voicing the doubts and despair of modern men, as rising to a great spiritual solution, and as creating a world of beauty that in itself calms and exalts.

The life of Tennyson (1809–1892).—The family background of Tennyson: character of his father; of his mother, as portrayed in *Isabel*. Early love of nature. Effect of the five years (from 7 to 12) at boarding school. Home studies till 19.

First venture in poetry at 18. Character and promise of Tennyson's work in the *Poems of Two Brothers*. Measure of justification in Tennyson's view of much of his youthful work as "early rot."

To Cambridge at 19. Chief influence upon him that of the circle of friends he slowly formed. The great men who as youths were his associates. Value of such comradeship for the intellectual and artistic life.

The volume of 1830.—At 21 Tennyson's first independent volume of poems. Character of the work: chiefly brief songs expressing moods or describing nature and women. Much of the poetry mainly experiments in developing Tennyson's art. Many touches of youthful sentimentality especially in the moody melancholy. Yet remarkable work of great promise. Compare with it Browning's *Paracelsus* written at a similar age.

The volumes of 1833.—A long step in advance taken in Tennyson's work published in 1833. Evidence of his permanent interests: forecasting of the *Idylls of the King* in *The Lady of Shalott*; of his idylls of common life in the *Miller's Daughter*; of his classical studies in *Ænone*. In all, luxuriant, sensuous imagery subordinated to varied wonderful music, with the lyrical expression of moods.

Reception of the volume. Tennyson's sensitiveness to the criticism invited by certain qualities in his work. Withdrawal from the public for ten years, spent in developing his art.

The one tragedy.—Tennyson's withdrawal further caused by the death of his dearest friend, Arthur Hallam, in 1833. Story of the friendship. Hallam's character and mind. The composition during seventeen years of Tennyson's monument to his friend.

The volumes of 1842.—Tennyson's silence broken by a work lifting him from being merely the center of a group of admiring friends to recognized leadership of English poetry. Changes in the early work republished. Range of the new work: poems of the Arthurian cycle; English idylls; lyrical expression of moods; classical studies. Illustrations.

Ulysses.—Tennyson's study of *Ulysses* not subsequently changed. His statement regarding the relation of the poem to his own life. Significance of the poem not only as one of Tennyson's most masterly achievements in art, but as laying down the program of his own conduct.

The fresh disaster.—Loss at 35 of Tennyson's small property. Special bitterness, because crushing his already long postponed hope of marriage. Story of the meetings with Emily Sellwood. Significance of the twenty years' waiting. Compare *Love and Duty*.

Reception of a pension in 1845. Brightening fortunes.

Victory in 1850.—At 41 Tennyson's long period of waiting closed

In that year: (1) marriage; (2) appointment as poet-laureate; (3) publication of *In Memoriam*. Consequences of the three events.

Subsequent life.—From 1850 to the end of Tennyson's career a story of steady progress.

His homes; relation to nature; association with friends; studies in science, philosophy, literature; travels; honors; financial prosperity. The range of his work during this forty years. The masterpiece upon which his effort centered. Significance of his attempts in the field of drama.

Characteristics of Tennyson's life.—Tennyson's reticence and exclusiveness. His hatred of the crowd but close attachment to individuals. His dwelling in an inner world of moods and reflections, stimulated by nature, friends and books. Long waiting and renunciation in his life rather than positive struggle and tragedy. Complete subordination of his life to his art. Compare Dante, Goethe, Browning.

Significance of Tennyson's work.—The characteristics of Tennyson's life as pointing the significance of his poetry. His work everywhere lyrical, even when dramatic in form, playing about character with atmosphere rather than creating from within. Contrast the two ways of portraying life. Thus an expression of subjective moods, voicing the need typical of the time and singing the answer Tennyson achieved. Moreover, Tennyson turning away from the hurry and distress of modern life and bringing consolation from the mystic world of dreams.

Thus Tennyson's catholicity one of art rather than of life. Compare other masters. His limitations as well as his excellencies explaining his contribution in beauty and in thought.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

“Alfred is one of the few British and foreign figures (a not increasing number I think) who are and remain beautiful to me, a true human soul, or some authentic approximation thereto, to whom your own soul can say, ‘Brother!’ However, I doubt he will not come [to see me]; he often skips me, in these brief visits to town; skips everybody, indeed; being a man solitary and sad, as certain men are, dwelling in an element of gloom, carrying a bit of Chaos about him, in short, which he is manufacturing into Cosmos. . . . He had his breeding at Cambridge, as if for the Law or Church; being a master of a small annuity on his father's decease, he preferred clubbing with his mother and some sisters, to live unpromoted and write Poems. In this way he lives still, now here, now there; the family always within reach of London, never in it; he himself making rare and brief visits, lodging in some

old comrade's rooms. I think he must be under forty, not much under it. One of the finest looking men in the world. A great shock of rough dusky dark hair; bright, laughing, hazel eyes; massive aquiline face, most massive yet most delicate; of sallow brown complexion, almost Indian looking, clothes cynically loose, free-and-easy, smokes infinite tobacco. His voice is musical, metallic, fit for loud laughter and piercing wail, and all that may lie between; speech and speculation free and plenteous; I do not meet in these late decades such company over a pipe! we shall see what he will grow to."—Carlyle's description of Tennyson for Emerson, Hallam Tennyson, *Memoir*, vol. I, pp. 187, 188.

"There is a strange earnestness in his worship of beauty which throws a charm over his impassioned song, more easily felt than described, and not to be escaped by those who have once felt it. . . . We have remarked five distinctive excellencies of his own manner. First, his luxuriance of imagination, and at the same time his control over it. Secondly, his power of embodying himself in ideal characters, or rather moods of character, with such accuracy of adjustment that the circumstances of the narrative seem to have a natural correspondence with the predominant feeling and, as it were, to be evolved from it by assimilative force. Thirdly, his vivid, picturesque delineation of objects, and the peculiar skill with which he holds all of them fused, to borrow a metaphor from science, in a medium of strong emotion. Fourthly, the variety of his lyrical measures and the exquisite modulation of harmonious words and cadences to the swell and fall of the feelings expressed. Fifthly, the elevated habits of thought, implied in these compositions, and importing a mellow soberness of tone, more impressive to our minds than if the author had drawn up a set of opinions in verse, and sought to instruct the understanding rather than to communicate the love of beauty to the heart."—From Arthur Hallam's review in the *Englishman's Magazine*, of Tennyson's volume of 1830, Hallam Tennyson, *Memoir*, vol. I, pp. 49, 50.

"*Ulysses*," my father said, "was written soon after Arthur Hallam's death, and gave my feeling about the need of going forward, and braving the struggle of life perhaps more simply than anything in *In Memoriam*."—Hallam Tennyson, *Memoir*, vol. I, p. 196.

TOPICS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION.

1. The range of metrical forms in Tennyson's volume of 1830.
2. Tennyson's nature-imagery.
3. The relative importance of music and imagery in Tennyson's early work.
4. Compare Browning's aim in *Paracelsus* with Tennyson's in the poems of 1830.
5. Tennyson's method of portraying character.
6. The type of classical interest in Tennyson.
7. Compare in art and in thought Tennyson's poems of 1830 and 1833 with Browning's *Paracelsus*.
8. Compare *Ulysses* and Canto XXVI of Dante's *Inferno*.
9. The meaning of the mood of vague melancholy expressed in so much of Tennyson's work.
10. The significance of Tennyson's long postponement of personal happiness for the sake of his art.
11. The relative significance of Tennyson's great friendship and of his marriage, for his life and development.

REFERENCES.

See the general book list, pp. 40-44. Books starred are of special value in connection with this course; those double-starred are texts for study or are otherwise of foremost importance.

Tennyson, poems published in 1830, especially: ***Claribel*; **Nothing will Die*; **All Things will Die*; ***Isabel*; ***Mariana*; **The Ballad of Oriana*; **Recollections of the Arabian Nights*; poems published in 1833, especially: ***The Lady of Shalott*; ***The Miller's Daughter*; ***Ænone*; **The Lotos-Eaters*; **The Sisters*; **The Palace of Art*; poems published in 1842, especially: ***Morte d'Arthur*; ***The Gardener's Daughter*; **Love and Duty*; ***Ulysses*; ***Sir Galahad*; ***Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere*; **Locksley Hall*; see also ***Early Poems* edited by Collins. Brooke, *The Poetry of Browning*, chap. I, *Browning and Tennyson; **Tennyson*, pp. 1-187. Chesterton and Garnett, *Tennyson*. Corson, *Primer of English Verse*. Dawson, *Makers of Modern English*. Horton, *Tennyson*. Luce, **Handbook*, chapters I-VIII. Lyall, *Tennyson*. Ritchie, *Records of Tennyson, Ruskin and Browning*, pp. 1-72. Van Dyke, **Poetry of Tennyson*, pp. 1-128; *Tennyson*. Waugh, *Tennyson*.

II. THE IDYLLS OF THE KING.

LECTURE OUTLINE.

Tennyson and the Arthurian story.—The question as to Tennyson's masterpiece. Largely a matter of the critic's temperament and intellectual interest whether *The Idylls of the King* or *In Memoriam* is ranked highest.

Tennyson's early and long continued interest in the legends of King Arthur and the knights of the Round Table. More than fifty years between his earliest and latest poems dealing with this material: thus a central interest throughout his artistic life. Compare *Faust* in relation to Goethe. The three distinct types and periods of Tennyson's work dealing with this body of legends of chivalry: significance as showing the development of Tennyson's mind and art.

The *Idylls* not an epic. Yet elements of unity binding the separate poems into one larger work of art.

Subject of the Idylls.—The cycle of mediæval legends growing up about the figures in old and dim British history. Good and evil in the society developed by mediæval chivalry.

Chivalry as representing the adolescent awakening of human society; thus appealing particularly to the similar period in the development of the individual. Thus value of the surviving legends for education.

Further value of chivalry for modern life. Especial attractiveness to Tennyson, because of his reaction from half-formed democracy and the sordid aspects of modern industry. His love of aristocracy, romance and the glamor of mystic dreams. Thus *The Idylls of the King* a center of his thought and one of his two great contributions.

The Coming of Arthur.—The introductory book published after four of the *Idylls*: this as indicating the gradual maturing of Tennyson's plan and the growth of the conscious allegory in his mind.

Arthur's desire for Guinevere: symbol of the hunger of the soul for the sensuous through which alone it may find expression. Mistake if the allegorical interpretation be pushed too far.

Forming of the Order. The knightly vow; compare the fuller statement in *Guinevere*. Tennyson's view of the ethical value for all time of the elements of the vow.

The Coming of Arthur as expressing the promise, *Guinevere* and *The Passing of Arthur* the fulfillment.

Gareth and Lynette.—The second *Idyll* published late but placed here as showing the making of a knight. The test to which Gareth is subjected. Tennyson's evident attitude toward humble work. Lynette's scorn and transformation.

Geraint and Enid.—The third *Idyll* presenting the womanhood of chivalry at its best. The contrasting portrait of false womanhood in Vivien coming from the same period.

Tennyson's method of beginning in the middle of a story. Geraint's wild quest. Story of Geraint's marriage with Enid; its narration hingeing on the incident of the faded dress.

Ideal of womanhood portrayed in Enid. Virtues emphasized. Value of such a type.

Balin and Balan.—The fourth *Idyll* last in point of composition, but inserted here to show the effect on other lives of evil in high places. The sin of Lancelot and Guinevere as a dark fate that slowly beats its way up to the surface of the legends and spreads its atmosphere of gloom and disaster over all the bright romance and shining figures of the story. Best illustration of this in *Balin and Balan*. Moving pathos in its conclusion.

Merlin and Vivien.—Study of the way in which the intellect and skill by which Arthur controls nature become the victims of sensual seduction; thus conquered by the charm "of woven places and of waving hands." Vivien's hate of all good. Her victory. Tennyson's skill in depicting a certain type of sensuous appeal.

Lancelot and Elaine.—This as the tenderest and best of the group of *Idylls* presenting the pure romance of the Arthurian story.

Lancelot's courtesy: how it all seems wooing to Elaine. Her doom in her own inner idealizing mood. How she reaches out to Lancelot's melancholy. Elaine and the shield: how she lived in fantasy. Tennyson's skill in portraying such an imaginative maiden type of womanhood.

Contrast Elaine with the earlier *Lady of Shalott*. Evidence of Tennyson's development and of the growth of the Arthurian legend in his mind.

Significance of Elaine's tragedy as the involving of the innocent with the guilty. How all darkens to eclipse.

Pelleas and Ettarre.—Study of careless vice and the marring of youthful innocence. Ettarre as fitting mate to Gawain. Contrast her with Enid and Elaine.

The Last Tournament.—The Tournament of the Dead Innocence. The victory of Sir Tristram as representing the return to mere lawless

nature, yet with echoes of the culture that must soon disappear. The fate of Tristram. Arthur's return.

Guinevere.—Conclusion to the romance of the *Idylls* in *Guinevere*. Significance in the discovery of the sin just at the moment of final parting between Lancelot and Guinevere. Flight of the Queen.

Tennyson's portrayal of Arthur. Question whether his character is convincing in spite of the way he is kept above and apart. Arthur's preaching: is his virtue too self-conscious?

Similarity in Tennyson to mediæval ethics in making woman the cause of failure. Is he just to Guinevere? The value of Guinevere as a presentation of human life; as a spiritual allegory.

Artistic qualities of the *Idylls*.—Tennyson's blank verse. His power in melody and description. Characteristic imagery of the *Idylls*. Tennyson's power in character-drawing: compare Shakespeare. Intangible quality of the figures of the *Idylls*. Compare Enid and Desdemona; Modred and Iago. Elements giving artistic unity to the *Idylls*: the character of Arthur, the theme, the underlying fate.

Impression of mystery in the *Idylls*. Its source: partly mystery in the old legends, but deeper than this the mystery of life. Tennyson's constant brooding over it.

Value of the *Idylls* for modern life.—Ethical impressiveness. Emphasis of courtesy, truth, personal loyalty, love and loyalty in love. Value of Tennyson's message.

Beauty of the *Idylls*. Refreshment in turning away from the hurry and noise of modern life to this world of golden and gray dreams. Magic and mystery in the characters of the poems, like the dim figures in some rich, half-effaced tapestry of olden time. Compare Tennyson in the *Idylls* with the Pre-Raphaelite English painters.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

"Lying, robed in snowy white
That loosely flew to left and right—
The leaves upon her falling light—
Thro' the noises of the night
She floated down to Camelot:
And as the boat-head wound along
The willowy hills and fields among,
They heard her singing her last song
The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,
By garden-wall and gallery,
A gleaming shape she floated by,
Dead-pale between the houses high,
Silent into Camelot.

Out upon the wharfs they came,
Knight and burgher, lord and dame,
And round the prow they read her name
The Lady of Shalott.

Who is this? and what is here?
And in the lighted palace near
Died the sound of royal cheer;
And they cross'd themselves for fear,
All the knights at Camelot:
But Lancelot mused a little space;
He said, 'She has a lovely face;
God in His mercy lend her grace,
The Lady of Shalott.'"

And Lancelot later came and mused at her,
 And last the Queen herself, and pitied her:
 But Arthur spied the letter in her hand,
 Stoopt, took, brake seal, and read it; this was all:

‘Most noble lord, Sir Lancelot of the Lake,
 I, sometime call’d the maid of Astolat,
 Come, for you left me taking no farewell,
 Hither, to take my last farewell of you.
 I loved you, and my love had no return,
 And therefore my true love has been my death.
 And therefore to our Lady Guinevere,
 And to all other ladies, I make moan:
 Pray for my soul, and yield me burial.
 Pray for my soul thou too, Sir Lancelot,
 As thou art a knight peerless.’”

—From *Lancelot and Elaine* (published 1859), pp. 414–416.

TOPICS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION.

1. What different stages can be discerned in Tennyson's treatment of the Arthurian story?
2. In what respects are Tennyson's *Idylls* a true interpretation of mediæval chivalry? In what respects are they distinctively modern?
3. The character and variety of the blank verse in the *Idylls*.
4. The type of imagery in the *Idylls*.
5. What elements unify the *Idylls* as a single work of art?
6. Compare *The Lady of Shalott* with *Lancelot and Elaine*.
7. Compare the earlier *Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere* with *Guinevere*.
8. The types of womanhood in the *Idylls*.
9. The types of manhood in the *Idylls*.
10. The knightly vow: Tennyson's view of the value for modern society of the virtues it emphasized.
11. Compare Elaine and Ophelia.
12. Compare Enid and Desdemona.
13. Compare Modred and Iago.
14. The ethical and artistic value of the character of Arthur.
15. Compare in dramatic reality the characters in the *Idylls* and in Shakespeare.
16. Compare the treatment of unlawful love in *Guinevere* and in Dante's Francesca da Rimini.
17. Tennyson's grasp of human life in the *Idylls* as compared with Goethe's in *Faust*.

REFERENCES.

Tennyson, ***The Lady of Shalott*; **Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere*; ***Idylls of the King*: ***The Coming of Arthur*; ***Gareth and Lynette*; ***Geraint and Enid*; **Balin and Balan*; **Merlin and Vivien*; ***Lancelot and Elaine*; **Pelleas and Ettarre*; **The Last Tournament*; ***Guinevere*. Brooke, *Tennyson*, pp. 255-319 and 336-370. Collins, **Illustrations of Tennyson*, chapter IX. Dawson, *Makers of Modern English*, chapters XX and XXIII. Luce, *Handbook*, chapter XI. Maccallum, **Tennyson's Idylls of the King*. Nicoll and Wise, *Literary Anecdotes of the Nineteenth Century*, volume II, pp. 222-272. Van Dyke, *Poetry of Tennyson*, pp. 155-217.

III. THE HOLY GRAIL AND THE PASSING OF ARTHUR.

LECTURE OUTLINE.

The Holy Grail.—Throughout the *Idylls* a faint spiritual allegory giving Tennyson's philosophy of human life regarded objectively. This allegory rising to clear statement in only one of the *Idylls*—*The Holy Grail*. This the poem giving unity to the whole series. Few characters in the other *Idylls*; in *The Holy Grail* the entire order, with a study of the different types of knighthood.

Legend of the Grail.—The whole body of chivalrous tradition centering on the quest of the Grail. Meaning of the old legend. Tennyson's use of the Grail as a mystic symbol of Christianity, thus as representing the higher call of the spirit in opposition to the duties of daily life. Reality of this conflict throughout Christian history; its place in Tennyson's spiritual philosophy.

Percivale's sister.—Value of the conception of womanhood Tennyson presents in Percivale's sister. Her monastic life. Type of purity she represents. Her vision of the Grail. Vague notion that the Grail will work the cure of all human ills; this notion inadequately worked out in the poems.

Sir Galahad.—Galahad as the knight of the Grail peculiarly. His quality purity. Contrast the portrayal of him here with the earlier *Sir Galahad*: remarkable evidence of Tennyson's development.

The vows.—Vision of the knights and vowing the quest of the Grail in the King's absence. Arthur's regret at the vows taken. His statement of the conflict between the higher call and ordinary duty. That conflict in every-day human life. Possibility of integrating the two calls; compare Browning's philosophy. Tennyson's emphasis of the opposition rather than the solution. Compare the conflict in his own life. Does this phase of his experience and philosophy furnish one explanation of his prevailing gloom? Sublimity and pathos in the pursuit of the transcendent ideal.

The five quests.—The tournament before departing; Percivale's victory. His quality of character; its corresponding weakness—spiritual pride. Hence the land of sand and thorns. Percivale's salvation through his fall.

Galahad's quest. Mystic impressiveness of the allegory. Value and limitations of Galahad as an ideal for common life.

How the vision was granted to Sir Bors. Peculiar impressiveness in the ethical lesson here.

Gawain's easy vice and consequent cynicism. How much more completely he fails of the truth than does any unpractical mystic or eccentric dreamer.

Lancelot's story. Dramatic fault in representing his confession here and a return to Guinevere afterward. Illustration of the imperfect dramatic unity of the *Idylls*. Yet, in the separate poem, high artistic and ethical impression in Lancelot's story.

Arthur's summing up: how following the higher call disturbs and thwarts; yet how imperative is obedience when the higher call truly comes.

The allegory of sense and soul.—Throughout *The Holy Grail* shadowed forth Tennyson's philosophy of an inevitable conflict between the soul and the senses which reaches its conclusion in *The Passing of Arthur*. Tennyson's own statement of this allegory in the epilogue *To the Queen*.

Measure of truth to human life in this aspect of the philosophy of the *Idylls*. How often the body, which should be servant, becomes master, that which should be the means becomes the end, with resulting disaster. Thus perfect harmony between the spiritual and the natural life possible only for a time and under unusual conditions. Compare the Greek world; the Italian renaissance; personal life.

No conception in Tennyson of growth through imperfections and misadjustments. His view of statical perfection, any change from which would mean decay. Thus realization of Arthur's dream only for a brief time in the Order; then rapid degeneration. The only hope substitution of one order of society for another. Compare the view of the state in Plato's *Republic*. Contrast this aspect of Tennyson's thought with the views of Browning and Goethe. Thus the explanation for the prevailing gloom and melancholy in Tennyson's portrayal of life in the *Idylls*.

The Passing of Arthur.—The gloom inherent in the view of life taken in the *Idylls* as never having received more moving expression than in *The Passing of Arthur*. At the same time in this poem Tennyson's supreme portrayal of moral heroism in the presence of inevitable disaster. This poem Tennyson's masterpiece in profound pathos.

Story of the battle. Slightly faulty connection in the insertion of the earlier *Morte d'Arthur*; yet perfect harmony in mood and spirit of the earlier with the later poem, thus showing how dominant that mood was throughout Tennyson's life.

The last of Excalibur. Tennyson's emphasis of unquestioning obedience. The barge and the Queen. The fate of Arthur as the fate of the ideal of chivalry. Marvelous poetry in the closing portion of the poem.

Philosophy of the poem.—Moral heroism of Arthur. How he fulfills the teaching to live well even within the gloom. Type of heroism he represents. Compare *Ulysses*. Compare the same spirit in Anglo-Saxon *Beowulf*. Significance of such heroism at the beginning and the end of the life of the race.

Tennyson's view of life as environed by mystery. Type of virtue demanded here. Summation of this aspect of Tennyson's philosophy in the weird line:

"From the great deep to the great deep he goes."
Universal value and application of this ethical philosophy.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

"My good blade carves the casques of men,
My tough lance thrusteth sure,
My strength is as the strength of ten,
Because my heart is pure.
The shattering trumpet shrilleth high,
The hard brands shiver on the steel,
The splinter'd spear-shafts crack and fly,
The horse and rider reel:
They reel, they roll in clanging lists,
And when the tide of combat stands,
Perfume and flowers fall in showers,
That lightly rain from ladies' hands.

How sweet are looks that ladies bend
On whom their favours fall!
For them I battle till the end,
To save from shame and thrall:
But all my heart is drawn above,
My knees are bow'd in crypt and shrine:
I never felt the kiss of love,
Nor maiden's hand in mine.
More bounteous aspects on me beam,
Me mightier transports move and thrill;
So keep I fair thro' faith and prayer
A virgin heart in work and will.

.

A maiden knight—to me is given
Such hope, I know not fear;
I yearn to breathe the airs of heaven
That often meet me here.

I muse on joy that will not cease,
Pure spaces clothed in living beams,
Pure lilies of eternal peace,
Whose odours haunt my dreams;
And, stricken by an angel's hand,
This mortal armour that I wear,
This weight and size, this heart and eyes,
Are touch'd, are turn'd to finest air."

—From *Sir Galahad* (published 1842), p. 110.

"And one there was among us, ever moved
Among us in white armour, Galahad.
'God make thee good as thou art beautiful,'
Said Arthur, when he dubb'd him knight; and none
In so young youth, was ever made a knight
Till Galahad; and this Galahad, when he heard
My sister's vision, fill'd me with amaze;
His eyes became so like her own, they seem'd
Hers, and himself her brother more than I.

.

But she, the wan sweet maiden, shore away
Clean from her forehead all that wealth of hair
Which made a silken mat-work for her feet;
And out of this she plaited broad and long
A strong sword-belt, and wove with silver thread
And crimson in the belt a strange device,
A crimson grail within a silver beam;
And saw the bright boy-knight, and bound it on him
Saying, 'My knight, my love, my knight of heaven,
O thou, my love, whose love is one with mine,
I, maiden, round thee, maiden, bind my belt.
Go forth, for thou shalt see what I have seen,
And break thro' all, till one will crown thee king
Far in the spiritual city:' and as she spake
She sent the deathless passion in her eyes
Thro' him, and made him hers, and laid her mind
On him, and he believed in her belief.

Then came a year of miracle: O brother,
In our great hall there stood a vacant chair,
Fashion'd by Merlin ere he past away,
And carven with strange figures; and in and out
The figures, like a serpent, ran a scroll
Of letters in a tongue no man could read.
And Merlin call'd it 'The Siege perilous,'
Perilous for good and ill; 'for there,' he said,
'No man could sit but he should lose himself:'
And once by misadventence Merlin sat
In his own chair, and so was lost; but he,
Galahad, when he heard of Merlin's doom,
Cried, 'If I lose myself, I save myself!'"

—From *The Holy Grail* (published 1869), pp. 420-421.

"Of all the *Idylls of the King*, *The Holy Grail* seems to me to express most my father's highest self. Perhaps this is because I saw him, in the writing of this poem more than in the writing of any other, with that far away rapt look on his face, which he had whenever he worked at a story that touched him greatly, or because I vividly recall the *inspired* way in which he chanted to us the different parts of the poem as they were composed."—Hallam Tennyson, *Memoir*, vol. II, p. 92.

"Poetry is like shot-silk with many glancing colours. Every reader must find his own interpretation according to his ability, and according to his sympathy with the poet. The whole is the dream of man coming into practical life and ruined by one sin. Birth is a mystery and death is a mystery, and in the midst lies the tableland of life, and its struggles and performances. It is not the history of one man or of one generation but of a whole cycle of generations."—Tennyson, in conversation on the *Idylls of the King*, Hallam Tennyson, *Memoir*, vol. II, p. 127.

TOPICS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION.

1. Compare in music and imagery the earlier studies of the Arthurian story with *The Holy Grail* and *The Passing of Arthur*.
2. Compare the study of Sir Galahad in the earlier poem of that name and in *The Holy Grail*.
3. Compare the *Morte d' Arthur* and *The Passing of Arthur*.
4. What is the relative value of the ethical and artistic elements in the *Idylls*?
5. What are the causes of the prevailing melancholy in Tennyson's view of life?
6. Which of the *Idylls* has the highest artistic value, and why?
7. Which of the *Idylls* has the highest ethical value, and why?
8. Is Tennyson's teaching regarding the opposition between the higher call and ordinary duties true to life?
9. How far are the lessons of *The Holy Grail* of universal application?
10. Compare *The Holy Grail* and Lowell's *Sir Launfal's Vision*.
11. Compare *The Holy Grail* and Wagner's *Parsifal*.
12. Compare *The Passing of Arthur* and the death of Beowulf in *Beowulf*, chapter XI.
13. The ethical value of Tennyson's philosophy of sense and soul.
14. In what ways does Tennyson's ethical view resemble that of Dante and the middle ages?
15. Compare Tennyson and Browning in the view of the senses in relation to the soul.

REFERENCES.

Tennyson, ***Sir Galahad*; ***Morte d' Arthur*; ***Idylls of the King: *Dedication*; ***The Holy Grail*; ***The Passing of Arthur*; ***To the Queen*. Brooke, *Tennyson*, pp. 319-336 and 370-391. Garnett, **Beowulf*, chapter XI, pp. 71-86. Horton, *Tennyson*, chapter VI. Luce, *Handbook*, chapter XI. Maccallum, **Tennyson's Idylls of the King*. Tainsh, *Study of Tennyson*, chapter XII.

IV. IN MEMORIAM: THE PERIOD OF GRIEF AND STRUGGLE.

LECTURE OUTLINE.

Introduction.—To turn now to the most autobiographic of Tennyson's poems, the one in which he gives his deepest spiritual thought in answer to the needs at once of his own life and of modern times. In *The Idylls of the King* Tennyson's objective ethical philosophy dealing with problems of the family, the state, and the growth and decay of society; in *In Memoriam* his subjective philosophy dealing with the problem of faith as a basis of conduct and with what we may dare to believe concerning God, freedom and immortality.

Occasion of In Memoriam.—History of the friendship between Tennyson and Arthur Henry Hallam. Character and genius of Hallam; his literary remains; opinions of his contemporaries regarding him.

Sudden death of Hallam in 1833. Sincerity of Tennyson's grief. The seventeen years of writing and thinking (ten of which Tennyson spent in complete retirement) from the death of Hallam to the publication of *In Memoriam*. Thus the experience the heart of Tennyson's own development, and the poem representing it a kind of Divine Comedy of personal life. Compare Tennyson's own statement.

In Memoriam as a literary masterpiece.—Significance of the personal subject of *In Memoriam*. Contrast other masterpieces: the poem of *Job*, *The Agamemnon Trilogy*, *Faust*, *The Divine Comedy*, *The Ring and the Book*. Expression of the spirit of modern times by Tennyson and Browning in making personal life the subject of a great work of art. Browning pre-eminently the poet of love, Tennyson of friendship.

The literature of friendship.—Studies of friendship in the Greek world: compare Homer, Æschylus, Plato, Aristotle. Relation of Tennyson to the classical spirit. Comparison of *In Memoriam* to other works in the literature of friendship: Shakespeare's *Sonnets*; Milton's *Lycidas*; Shelley's *Adonais*.

Stanza form of In Memoriam.—Peculiar poetic value of the stanza used in *In Memoriam*; significance that Tennyson believed he had

invented it. Adaptation of this stanza to the different moods of the poem.

Composition of the poem.—*In Memoriam* not simply a direct expression of personal feeling. Lyrics written at different times and loosely bound together. Relation of lyrical to dramatic elements. Tennyson studying "the working out of a spiritual fact." Compare the direct expression of personal feeling in such a lyric as *Break, break, break*.

Imagery of the poem.—Tennyson's wonderful skill in using the same symbol in different parts of the poem to give unity and at the same time point the contrasting moods. Compare the house described in cantos VII and CXIX. Compare the Yew; the repeated descriptions of Christmas and other significant anniversaries. Extreme care with which Tennyson works out every image. Unity of music and imagery.

The initial attitude of grief.—The blind clinging to sorrow as the only remaining bond with love. Expression of the demand for permanence that is one of the two fundamental hungers of the human soul (cantos I-IV).

Grief in words (V). Question as to the personal sincerity of *In Memoriam*. The false comfort of those who tell us grief is common (VI).

The ship (IX-XIX). Calm and storm on the sea and in the moods of the poet. Tennyson's use of nature to express human experience.

The first Christmas (XXVIII-XXX).—Pain in an anniversary returning with the absence of those whose presence made it joyous. Yet what Christmas suggests and symbolizes; thus serving to introduce the first series of spiritual problems.

First cycle of spiritual reflections (XXXI-XXXVI).—Story of Lazarus. The Christian tradition not abrogating the mystery of death. Value of the attitude of unreasoning acceptance in Mary. Tennyson's view of the blessedness of such faith and the need to leave it undisturbed. The personal argument for immortality. The cycle closing with the return of the mood of doubt. The series followed by an interlude of poems expressing the more personal relation to the friend.

Second cycle of spiritual reflections (XLV-XLVII).—The mystery of personality. Turning from the question what death is to what life is. Again the hunger for permanence; a vague pantheism giving no satisfactory answer.

Another interlude of more personal songs. How these lays are to be taken (XLVIII). Need of the friend in the mood when faith is dry (L). Effect of sin on the relation to the friend (LI, LII).

Third cycle of spiritual reflections (LIII-LVI).—Is growth possible through sin? Tennyson's view of good and evil: compare Goethe. Significance of what Tennyson emphasizes.

Tennyson's wonderful expression, in cantos LIV-LVI, of the cry of despairing longing, typical of the modern spirit in the presence of the mystery of the universe and temporarily overwhelmed by the discoveries and generalizations of physical science. The mood Tennyson expresses as culminating during the middle of the nineteenth century. Service of Tennyson in bringing the depths of doubt and questioning, characteristic of his epoch, to conscious expression in exquisite melody and marvelous imagery.

Close of the first movement of *In Memoriam*.—Following Tennyson's comparison of his poem to *The Divine Comedy*, its first portion the "Inferno." Yet contrast with Dante. Range of problems Tennyson considers; yet all immediately connected with his personal experience. Mood with which the first movement of the poem closes: the recurring question; no answer; impossible to wring faith from the spiritual universe by struggle; so in half-benumbed condition we must wait in the dark.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

"It must be remembered that this is a poem, *not* an actual biography. It is founded on our friendship, on the engagement of Arthur Hallam to my sister, on his sudden death at Vienna, just before the time fixed for their marriage, and on his burial at Clevedon Church. The poem concludes with the marriage of my youngest sister Cecilia. It was meant to be a kind of *Divina Commedia*, ending with happiness. The sections were written at many different places, and as the phases of our intercourse came to my memory and suggested them. I did not write them with any view of weaving them into a whole, or for publication, until I found that I had written so many. The different moods of sorrow as in a drama are dramatically given, and my conviction that fear, doubts, and suffering will find answer and relief only through Faith in a God of Love."—Note of Tennyson's concerning *In Memoriam*, Hallam Tennyson, *Memoir*, vol. I, pp. 304, 305.

"I know not how to express what I have felt. My first sentiment was surprise, for, though I now find that you had mentioned the intention to my daughter, Julia, she had never told me of the poems. I do not speak as another would to praise and admire: few of them indeed I have as yet been capable of reading, the grief they express is too much akin to that that they revive. It is better than any monument which could be raised to the memory of my beloved son, it is a more lively and enduring testimony to his great virtues and talents that the world should know the friendship which existed between you, that posterity

should associate his name with that of Alfred Tennyson."—From a letter of Henry Hallam to Tennyson in 1850, concerning *In Memoriam*, Hallam Tennyson, *Memoir*, vol. I, p. 327.

TOPICS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION.

1. Compare the stanza Tennyson uses in *In Memoriam* with the ordinary quatrain; with the stanza used in Fitzgerald's *Omar Khayyám*.
2. Characteristics of the imagery in the first third of *In Memoriam*.
3. What methods does Tennyson employ to give unity to *In Memoriam*?
4. Compare the descriptions of the house in cantos VII and CXIX.
5. Compare the treatment of friendship in *In Memoriam* and in Greek literature and philosophy.
6. Compare the treatment of friendship in *In Memoriam* and in the *Sonnets* of Shakespeare.
7. The life and literary remains of Arthur Henry Hallam.
8. The relation of lyrical to dramatic elements in *In Memoriam*.
9. The personal sincerity of the grief expressed in *In Memoriam*.
10. Compare the lyric "Break, break, break," with the opening cantos of *In Memoriam*.
11. The moral significance of the clinging to sorrow expressed in the early cantos of *In Memoriam*.
12. Compare *In Memoriam* and Milton's *Lycidas*.
13. Compare *In Memoriam* and Shelley's *Adonais*.
14. What is the value in the artistic expression of moods of doubt and questioning?
15. Compare Tennyson, Goethe and Dante in their view of good and evil.

REFERENCES.

Tennyson, ** "Break, break, break, on thy cold gray stones O sea;" ***In Memoriam*, cantos I-LVI, inclusive. Azarias, Brother, **Phases of Thought and Criticism*, pp. 183-215. Bradley, **Commentary on In Memoriam*. Brooke, *Tennyson*, pp. 188-228. Chapman, *Companion to In Memoriam*. Corson, *Primer of English Verse*, pp. 69-77. Davidson, **Prolegomena to In Memoriam*, chapters I-IX. Dawson, *Makers of Modern English*, chapter XXV. Genung, **Tennyson's In Memoriam*. Luce, *Handbook*, chapter IX. Masterman, *Tennyson as a Religious Teacher*. Van Dyke, *Poetry of Tennyson*, pp. 131-151.

V. IN MEMORIAM: THE CANTOS OF FAITH AND LOVE.

LECTURE OUTLINE.

Second movement of the poem.—The “Purgatorio” beginning with the song “Peace, come away!” (LVII). The sense of the uselessness of crying out, so dumb acceptance. Sorrow now an abiding companion instead of being the cause of a spiritual crisis.

The new series dealing with the poet’s relation to the friend. His love compared to that of a girl loving above her rank (LX). Yet love absolute (LXI). Love is perfect enough to give up even its own desire for an answer if that would hold the friend back (LXII). Love will look back upon the one left behind as a great man upon his childhood’s comrade (LXIV). The reflections now all dealing with life rather than death.

The blossoming of the crown of thorns.—Canto LXIX expressing perfectly the spirit of the second division of the poem. Contrast the crown of thorns blossoming, with reaching “a hand through time to catch the far-off interest of tears.” How sorrow does refine and educate in compensation for the death it may bring to other aspects of life. Nature of the good coming through the ministry of suffering. The good coming not because anticipated, but because of the spirit in which the sorrow was accepted.

The second Christmas.—Contrast the mood in cantos LXXVIII and LXXXIII with that in cantos XXVIII–XXX. Clearer acceptance of immortality: compare canto LXXXII. The tender personal dream of what might have been (LXXXIV).

The second friendship (LXXXV).—Close of the second division of the poem with the acceptance of the new friendship. Relation of the new to the old. Spirit in which this “primrose of the later year” is offered and accepted.

Third movement of the poem.—Beginning of the “Paradiso” with the exultant song of joy and peace in canto LXXXVI. Significance that the whole song is a single sentence. This canto an admirable example of Tennyson’s power to make the stanza-form of *In Memoriam* respond to his more positive and exultant emotions as well as to voice the minor music of the sad moods.

Possible now to brood tenderly, with a sad joy, over the memories of the past.

The new relation to the past.—Reflections over the measure of union with the friend possible now. Heart-hunger for the lost human touch (XCI). Desire that the friend's spirit might come (XCIII). Tennyson rising in canto XCV to the dream of spiritual union. This as representing the taking of the past up into his own soul. Acceptance not by forgetting but by remembering. Compare this experience with Dante's *Lethe* and *Eunoë*.

Solution of the problem of doubt.—Canto XCVI complementary to canto XXXIII. Need to leave simple faith undisturbed; yet once it is broken, need to press on through doubt to the larger faith that includes it. Mistake in pulling the chrysalis off from a half-formed butterfly; yet once the chrysalis is broken, the only hope to go on and grow wings.

The third Christmas.—Preparation for leaving the home with its loved associations (CI). The dream of reunion that comforts in breaking the associations of youth and friendship (CIII). The new Christmas in strange surroundings (CIV, CV). Compare in mood in cantos XXX and LXXVIII.

The New Year and the new ideals (CVI). Ability to look forward instead of backward, to take the past up into the soul and face the future.

Hallam's character (CIX–CXIII).—Tennyson's pleasure in portraying the character of his friend. Influence of Hallam's spirit upon others (CX). Ideal of the gentleman exemplified in Hallam (CXI). The career the friend might have had (CXIII).

Knowledge versus wisdom.—Tennyson's view of the life of appreciation in relation to the life of the understanding. Thus conception of religion in relation to science. Value of this aspect of Tennyson's philosophy in connection with his whole spiritual contribution.

Closing cycle of spiritual reflections (CXVII–CXXXI).—Absolute acceptance of personal immortality and belief that Time is the sphere for the evolution of the soul. This changed attitude due less to intellectual reasoning than to change in mood and development of inner experience: significance. View of science and the hypothesis of physical evolution (CXX). Tennyson's acceptance of the results of modern science, though with some measure of reluctance. Value of his integration of the results of science with the best teachings of religion and of the older philosophy.

Recognition of ceaseless change in the material universe with a reality in the spirit to which he can trust. Statement of his highest thought of the Divine (CXXIV). Compare canto LIV.

Tennyson's social philosophy (CXXVII).—Conservatism of Tennyson in his view of society as in his attitude toward science. Yet in both acceptance of the new. Recognition of the promise of peace and harmony issuing from the storms of social revolution.

Concluding song.—The long canto celebrating the marriage of Tennyson's sister a fitting conclusion to the whole poem. Perfect spiritual faith and glad acceptance of life that breathes through it. Joy in the present with full memory of the past. The ideal and dream of nobler life that is to be, and connection of this with the broken promise of the life that was.

Closing stanza as "gathering up Aristotle's four causes," and affirming Tennyson's faith in answer to the great problems of philosophy.

The *Prelude*.—The *Prelude* presenting a more complete summary of Tennyson's spiritual philosophy than even the closing song. Remarkable inclusiveness of the *Prelude* in reference to the theses and problems of philosophy. The faith Tennyson affirms in answer to these: its source; its significance in relation to modern life.

Conclusion.—Value of the poem: (1) As a beautiful creation; (2) As a revelation of personal experience; (3) As a study of education through suffering; (4) As a study of the deeper problems of philosophy and religion.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

"If a man is merely to be a bundle of sensations, he had better not exist at all. He should embark on his career in the spirit of selfless and adventurous heroism; should develop his true self by not shirking responsibility, by casting aside all maudlin and introspective morbidities, and by using his powers cheerfully in accordance with the obvious dictates of his moral consciousness, and so, as far as possible, in harmony with what he feels to be the Absolute Right. . . .

It is motive, it is the great purpose which consecrates life. The real test of a man is not what he knows, but what he is in himself and in his relation to others. For instance, can he battle against his own bad inherited instincts, or brave public opinion in the cause of truth? The love of God is the true basis of duty, truth, reverence, loyalty, love, virtue and work. I believe in these although I feel the emptiness and hollowness of much of life. 'Be ye perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect.' But don't be a prig. Most young men with anything in them make fools of themselves at some time or other."—Tennyson, in conversation with a young man about to enter the University, Hallam Tennyson, *Memoir*, vol. I, pp. 317, 318.

"Yet God *is* love, transcendent, all-pervading! We do not get *this* faith from Nature or the world. If we look at Nature alone, full of perfection and imperfection, she tells us that God is disease, murder and rapine. We get this faith from ourselves, from what is highest within us, which recognizes that there is not one fruitless pang, just as there is not one lost good."—Tennyson, in conversation with Hallam Tennyson in 1892, *Memoir*, vol. I, p. 314.

"He had no kind of sympathy with the theory which would divorce art from morals, and I have known no literary man who had a more uniformly high sense of duty in connection with his work. It was a sense of duty not only to the living and the unborn, but also, and in a very marked degree, to the dead. In speaking of the character of Becket, I remember his expressing the dread he always felt, lest he should do some injustice to the actions or motives of those who are in their graves. He hated with an intense hatred all literary quarrels, and rivalries, and jealousies, and his literary judgment seemed to me not only singularly sane and unexaggerated, but also singularly unbiased by his personal likings. . . .

Your father thought much about religious matters and often dwelt with great force on his intuitive conviction of immortality, with its corollaries of Theism and Providence. These beliefs he held very strongly, but they were, I think, wholly detached in his mind from the dogmas of particular creeds. . . . As all attentive readers of his poetry will have perceived, he was much occupied with, and disturbed by, the subversive theories that were abroad, but chiefly I think on account of their bearing on the great primal beliefs which I have mentioned, which he believed to be the main pillars on which the goodness, happiness and dignity of man must ultimately rest."—From recollections of Tennyson by W. E. H. Lecky, written for Hallam Tennyson, *Memoir*, vol. II, pp 203, 206.

TOPICS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION.

1. How far may *In Memoriam* be regarded as a direct expression of Tennyson's personal feelings and experience?
2. Compare Tennyson and Browning in their expression and interpretation of personal life.
3. Compare Tennyson and Browning in their treatment of the religious problem in modern times.
4. The range of Tennyson's studies as revealed in *In Memoriam*.
5. Tennyson's attitude toward modern science.
6. Tennyson's relation to ancient philosophy.

7. The relation of Tennyson to Christianity as revealed in *In Memoriam*.
8. What grounds are given in the poem for the change in Tennyson's attitude toward the problem of immortality?
9. Tennyson's view of the relation of knowledge to wisdom.
10. Tennyson's social philosophy as given in *In Memoriam*.
11. Sources of the faith Tennyson affirms in the closing portion of *In Memoriam*.
12. The range of problems included in the *Prelude* to *In Memoriam*.
13. Compare *In Memoriam* and *The Ring and the Book* as literary masterpieces.
14. Compare *In Memoriam*, *Faust* and *The Divine Comedy* as literary masterpieces.

REFERENCES.

Tennyson, ***In Memoriam, Prelude*, and from canto LVII to the end. Azarias, Brother, **Phases of Thought and Criticism*, pp. 215-264. Bradley, **Commentary on In Memoriam*. Brooke, *Tennyson*, pp. 188-228. Carpenter, *The Religious Spirit in the Poets*, chapter IX. Chapman, *Companion to In Memoriam*. Davidson, **Prolegomena to In Memoriam*, Introduction and chapters X-XVI. Dawson, *Makers of Modern English*, chapters XXIV, XXV. Genung, **Tennyson's In Memoriam*. Kingsley, *Literary and General Lectures*, pp. 101-124. Lindsay, *Essays*, pp. 79-119. Luce, *Handbook*, chapter IX. Masterman, **Tennyson as a Religious Teacher*. Sneath, *The Mind of Tennyson*.

VI. THE EXPRESSION OF TENNYSON'S SPIRITUAL PHILOSOPHY IN BRIEFER POEMS.

LECTURE OUTLINE.

Tennyson's highest self-expression.—*The Idylls of the King* and *In Memoriam* distinctly Tennyson's masterpieces. Yet both composed of exquisite separate poems only loosely bound together in the whole work of art. Tennyson distinctively the lyric poet, at his best in the brief poems expressing a single mood or phase of thought. Thus any study of Tennyson incomplete without a consideration of the wonderful brief poems in which his philosophy and his artistic power receive culminating expression.

The Wreck (published 1885).—*The Wreck* one of the best illustrations of the dramatic type among Tennyson's shorter poems. Metrical power and pathetic impressiveness of the poem. Tennyson as the poet of law. Thus here emphasis of the usual view of life, giving the hell of expiation as in Dante, but with no suggestion of the power of recovery of the human spirit as in Goethe and Browning. Significance of the view of life presented.

Romney's Remorse (published 1889).—A further illustration of Tennyson's brief dramatic poems and of his philosophy of personal life in *Romney's Remorse*. This poem presenting the complementary problem to *Andrea del Sarto*, and reading as if written in conscious answer to Browning's poem. One of the best examples of Tennyson's use of the dramatic monologue. Moving pathos of the poem. Beauty of the inserted lyric. In this study again a strong affirmation of the conventional view of life with its essential rightness.

Tennyson's view of society.—Tennyson's social philosophy similar in spirit to his view of personal life. Compare the *Beautiful City*; the cantos of *In Memoriam* speaking of the "Red fool fury of the Seine" and the "School boy heat and blind hysterics of the Celt." Tennyson's view thoroughly English, never cosmopolitan. Contrast Goethe. The strength of Tennyson the strength of what is best in conservative English aristocracy. His view of the common people always that of the artist who looks on sympathetically from the outside, never that of one warmly identified with the life of the people themselves.

By an Evolutionist (published 1889).—The same spirit in Tennyson's cosmic as in his social philosophy. His acceptance of the results of physical science, yet combining these with conservatism in religion and ethics. Compare the view of old age in *By an Evolutionist* with that in Browning's *Rabbi Ben Ezra*. Remarkable metrical structure in *By an Evolutionist*.

The general view of human progress Tennyson takes in *The Dawn*. Significance that most of these brief expressions of Tennyson's philosophy come so late in his life.

The Ancient Sage (published 1885).—*The Ancient Sage* as summing up most consciously and completely Tennyson's attitude toward the mystery of life and his philosophy of faith in relation to conduct. Significance in the introductory poem to Fitzgerald. *The Ancient Sage* as in conscious answer to Fitzgerald's translation of Omar Khayyám. No recognition in Tennyson's poem of the grave dignity of Omar, but answer to the picturesque pessimism of youth that takes sentimental delight in its own melancholy. Significant that Tennyson had something of the same spirit in his own youth; thus the poem showing how completely his later thought rises above such sentimental pessimism.

Tennyson's emphasis of "the will to believe." Cleaving to the "sunnier side of doubt." His teaching regarding what we may dare to believe, and act on as if it were true. Value of the lesson not to

"Take thy dial for thy deity,"

but

"Make the passing shadow serve thy will."

Compare the emphasis of this lesson in the early *Ulysses*, in *In Memoriam*, in *The Passing of Arthur*. Thus central import of Tennyson's teaching regarding moral heroism.

Further summing up of the mystery and unity of life in "*Flower in the Crannied Wall*" and *The Higher Pantheism*. Relation of this thought to Christianity.

Merlin and the Gleam (published 1889). One poem in which Tennyson has given a brief spiritual autobiography. Significance of the unusual metrical form in *Merlin and the Gleam*. The motive principle of Tennyson's life as revealed in this poem. Range of his artistic experience. His own view of his life and work.

Wages (published 1869).—Another summing up of the fundamental attitude of Tennyson's life in the wonderful two-stanza poem *Wages*. Sonorous sweep of the verse. Perfect union of thought and form. An excellent example of his artistic power at its best.

Crossing the Bar (published 1889).—The poem Tennyson desired to have placed at the end of every complete edition of his works. Limpid music, perfect imagery, marvelous art in the utter simplicity of this

poem. Illustrating the highest point of Tennyson's art as well as giving the most direct statement of his religious faith. Compare in form and content Browning's *Epilogue to Asolando*.

Conclusion.—Summary of Tennyson's art: in music, imagery, lyrical beauty. Exquisite simplicity with careful adornment. Expression always adequate and harmonious to thought and mood and almost monotonously melodious.

Summary of Tennyson's philosophy: in reference to personal life, social progress, science and cosmic law, the problems of religion. Tennyson's acceptance of evolution; his belief in the unity of life and law; his faith in God, freedom, immortality and duty; his emphasis of heroism in the presence of the mystery of life.

Sources of Tennyson's message: in experience, in the common consciousness and religious tradition, in science harmonized with the great spiritual thinking of the past.

Special value of Tennyson's poetry and philosophy for the age to which he sang. Permanent worth in his art and message for all time.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

"I have just been reading your Poems; I have read certain of them over again, and mean to read them over and over till they become my poems: this fact, with the inferences that lie in it, is of such emphasis in *me*, I cannot keep it to myself, but must needs acquaint you too with it. If you knew what my relation has been to the thing call'd English 'Poetry' for many years back, you would think such fact almost surprising! Truly it is long since in any English Book, Poetry or Prose, I have felt the pulse of a real man's heart as I do in this same. A right valiant, true fighting, victorious heart; strong as a lion's, yet gentle, loving and full of music: what I call a genuine singer's heart! there are tones as of the nightingale; low murmurs as of wood-doves at summer noon; everywhere a noble sound as of the free winds and leafy woods. The sunniest glow of Life dwells in that soul, chequered duly with dark streaks from night and Hades: everywhere one feels as if all were fill'd with yellow glowing sunlight, some glorious golden Vapour; from which form after form bodies itself; naturally, *golden* forms. In one word, there seems to be a note of 'The Eternal Melodies' in this man; for which let all other men be thankful and joyful!"—From a letter of Thomas Carlyle to Tennyson, dated 7th Dec., 1842, Hallam Tennyson, *Memoir*, vol. I, p. 213.

"Everyone will have seen men, distinguished in some line of work, whose conversation (to take the old figure) either 'smelt too strongly

of the lamp,' or lay quite apart from their art or craft. What, through all these years, struck me about Tennyson, was that whilst he never deviated into poetical language as such, whether in rhetoric or highly coloured phrase, yet throughout the substance of his talk the same mode of thought, the same imaginative grasp of nature, the same fineness and gentleness in his view of character, the same forbearance and toleration, the *aurea mediocritas* despised by fools and fanatics, which are stamped on his poetry, were constantly perceptible: whilst in the easy and as it were unsought choiceness, the conscientious and truth-loving precision of his words, the same personal identity revealed itself. What a strange charm lay here; how deeply illuminating the whole character, as in prolonged intercourse it gradually revealed itself! Artist and man, Tennyson was invariably true to himself, or rather, in Wordsworth's phrase, he 'moved altogether'; his nature and his poetry being harmonious aspects of the same soul."—From recollections of Tennyson by F. T. Palgrave, Hallam Tennyson, *Memoir*, vol. II, p. 492.

"*Crossing the Bar* was written in my father's eighty-first year, on a day in October when we came from Aldworth to Farringford. Before reaching Farringford he had the Moaning of the Bar in his mind, and after dinner he showed me this poem written out.

I said, 'That is the crown of your life's work.' He answered, 'It came in a moment.' He explained the 'Pilot' as 'That Divine and Unseen Who is always guiding us.'

A few days before my father's death he said to me: 'Mind you put *Crossing the Bar* at the end of all editions of my poems.'"—Hallam Tennyson, *Memoir*, vol. II, pp. 366, 367.

TOPICS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION.

1. Compare carefully in metrical structure the brief poems studied.
2. *Merlin and the Gleam* as a brief personal autobiography of Tennyson.
3. Compare *The Wreck* and the cathedral scene in the first part of Goethe's *Faust*.
4. Compare *Romney's Remorse* and Browning's *Andrea del Sarto*.
5. Why is there so much more consideration of the problems of the development and readjustment of society in Tennyson than in Browning?
6. Compare the view of old age in *By an Evolutionist* and in Browning's *Rabbi Ben Ezra*.

7. The ethical lesson emphasized in *The Ancient Sage*.
8. The relative value of the study of Epicureanism and its failure as given in *The Ancient Sage* and in Browning's *Cleon*.
9. The relation of Tennyson's art to his life.
10. Compare *Crossing the Bar* and Browning's *Epilogue to Asolando*.
11. In what respects is Tennyson the poet of law and order?
12. Compare Tennyson and Goethe in cosmopolitanism of view.
13. The different relations of Tennyson and Browning to Christianity.
14. Tennyson's gospel of moral heroism.
15. The relative value of ethical and artistic elements in Tennyson's poetry.
16. The permanent value of Tennyson's spiritual philosophy as compared with its helpfulness for the nineteenth century.

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Books starred are of special value in connection with this course; those double-starred are texts for study and discussion, or are otherwise of first importance.

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